

Members

Rep. Robert Bischoff, Chairperson
Rep. Kreg Battles
Rep. William Ruppel
Rep. Phyllis Pond
Sen. James Merritt, Vice-Chairperson
Sen. Travis Holdman
Sen. James Lewis
Sen. Richard Young



STATE FAIR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Legislative Services Agency

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Authority: IC 15-1-1.5-4

MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: October 26, 2009
Meeting Time: 10:00 A.M.
Meeting Place: Board Room of the Administration Building, Indiana State Fairgrounds, 1202 E. 38th Street
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 2

Members Present: Rep. Robert Bischoff, Chairperson; Rep. William Ruppel; Rep. Phyllis Pond; Sen. James Merritt, Vice-Chairperson; Sen. James Lewis.

Members Absent: Rep. Kreg Battles; Sen. Travis Holdman; Sen. Richard Young.

Chairperson Bischoff called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

1. Report Regarding the 2009 Indiana State Fair

David Ellis, the Fair's Director of Finance, gave the Committee a brief update of the 2009 Fair (Exhibit A). The Fair exceeded 2008 results in both income and expenses because it was the first year for a 17 day fair, but was significantly down in net income. One factor affecting the budgeted versus actual amount was due to entertainment admissions. At the

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outset, it is not known what acts will appear and thus it is hard to predict what the entertainment income and expenses will be. Payroll expenses for the Fair were up slightly for this longer event. Responding to Representative Ruppel, Mr. Ellis stated that there is probably enough in accumulated funds to finish the 4-H Buildings renovation project, but it is being held off for completion in order to be prudent. Chairperson Bischoff congratulated the staff on another outstanding Fair. As Representative Pond's district is close to Michigan, she has heard people express the opinion that Indiana must keep its fair from demise as has happened to the Michigan State Fair.

2. Report Regarding the Center for Agricultural Science and Heritage

Center for Agricultural Science and Heritage Barn Director Justin Armstrong stated that the "State's Largest Classroom" had five weeks of instruction in the fall and will have five weeks in the spring. Mr. Armstrong is working on arranging curricula that would allow students to receive instructional credit for weekday Fair participation (Exhibit B). He has been working with 4-H, the Indiana Department of Education, and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Tony Bennett on this issue. The Barn will continue to encourage field trips during the days of the Fair, which need to be scheduled by the end of the spring semester. Responding to Representative Pond, Mr. Armstrong answered that school groups usually cannot visit the Barn if the distance is over 2 hours in transit. He told Representative Pond that the Barn has a van which is used to visit outlying school districts. Representative Pond would like to know when it is near her district so she can see the educational activity. She encouraged outreach. Mr. Armstrong told Chairperson Bischoff that about 15,000 visitors come through the Barn on an annual basis and, if that sum is divided by 25-30 persons, one can estimate the number of groups visiting. On-site capacity is about 150 to 200 persons, although the maximum was 325 visitors.

3. Discussion Regarding the Fall Starting Date for the K-12 School Year

Susan Montgomery reported on the September 30, 2009, meeting of the Interim Study Committee on Education, at which the subject of school start date and calendar flexibility was discussed. There were 21 individuals testifying. The subject will also be a topic of discussion at the meeting of the Interim Study Committee on Education to be held later this afternoon. Representative Ruppel reminded the Committee that many school districts had moved the fall school start date into August to prepare for the fall ISTEP test and to accommodate the sports programs. With ISTEP now being held in the spring, there may be no need for the earlier start date. Senator Merritt voiced concern for students and staff in schools that do not have air conditioning. Representative Pond believed that determination of the start date should be left to each school corporation and stated concerns for businesses that have to shut down in the late summer because they depend on high school workers who must return to school. Representative Pond also liked the concept in Representative Dvorak's HB 1354 (2009) that allowed school corporations to "bank" instructional time for purposes of determining the number of student instructional days.

4. Discussion Regarding the State Fair Fund Investment (IC 15-13-8)

Joy Rothrock, Director of Legal/Governmental/Public Affairs for the Fairgrounds reported to the Committee that the State Fair Commission (Commission) was the subject of an audit by the State Board of Accounts (SBOA) that found an error in the manner of investing funds under IC 15-13-8-4. The Commission believed that it was in statutory compliance with investing under IC 15-13-8-3 and IC 15-13-8-8. Mr. Ellis and Ms. Rothrock have had discussions on this issue with individuals representing the State Budget Agency, the office of the Attorney General, and the SBOA. There will be an

upcoming meeting with State Treasurer Richard Mourdock on this subject. Although the issue is not yet resolved, Ms. Rothrock's opinion is that at this time there is no need for legislation to be proposed by the Committee. She feels that the scrutiny by the SBOA is that of a risk management aspect and that she is optimistic that there will be a favorable outcome to their discussions. Representative Pond voiced a concern that there might be a difference between the interest earned with money deposited with the State Treasurer and with an outside investment. Representative Ruppel requested that Ms. Rothrock report to the Committee the outcome of the meetings with the various state agencies and that the staff of the Legislative Services Agency report the resolution to the Committee. Discussion ensued regarding the filing of a bill on this subject during the 2010 Session.

5. Introduction of the State Fair Commission Presiding Officer

Cynthia Hoyer, Executive Director of the Commission, introduced Andre Lacy, the newly appointed Presiding Officer of the Commission. Senator Merritt remarked that the Commission is very fortunate to have Mr. Lacy as the head and that he wanted to recognize the Commission for its interest in the Fair.

6. Discussion of the Sale of Alcohol at the Indiana State Fairgrounds During the Indiana State Fair

Senator Merritt has been a member of the Interim Study Committee on Alcoholic Beverages Issues which held its last meeting this month. This Committee conducted a study of all facets of alcohol laws but made no recommendation for a change to IC 7.1-5-10-17, which prohibits the sale or dispensing of alcoholic beverages on the Fairgrounds during the period of the Fair. Since wineries now are a solid share of Indiana agriculture, Representative Ruppel is interested in allowing wine tasting at an event held during the Fair. Chairperson Bischoff remarked that he believes Ohio and Indiana are the only major fairs that do not allow alcohol on the premises. Representative Pond said that she had no problem with wine tasting, but cautioned that the Fair also serves the youth of Indiana. The Committee made no recommendation with regard to a change in IC 7.1-5-10-17.

There being no further business before the Committee, Chairperson Bischoff adjourned the meeting at 11:14 a.m.